



# National Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy



January 2012

## *Preliminary Planning Criteria*

Planning criteria are the constraints or ground rules that guide and direct the development of the Land Use Plan (LUP) amendment and determine how the planning team approaches development of alternatives and, ultimately, selection of a Preferred Alternative. Planning criteria ensure that plans are tailored to the identified issues and ensure that unnecessary data collection and analyses are avoided. They focus on the decisions to be made in the plan and 1) provide an early tentative basis for inventory and data collection needs, and 2) enable the managers and staff to develop a preliminary planning base map delineating geographic analysis units.

Note: These criteria are preliminary at this stage of the planning and may be modified following scoping.

### **Preliminary Planning Criteria:**

- The LUP amendments will focus on making land use planning decisions specific to the conservation of greater sage-grouse habitats.
- The LUP amendments will recognize valid existing rights.
- Decisions made in this planning effort will apply only to lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and US Forest Service (Forest Service) in greater sage-grouse habitats.
- The BLM will use a collaborative and multi-jurisdictional approach, where possible, to jointly determine the desired future condition of public lands for the conservation of greater sage-grouse habitats.
- As described by law and policy, the BLM will strive to ensure that its management prescriptions are as consistent as possible with other planning jurisdictions within the planning area boundaries.
- Management prescriptions will consider a range of alternatives that focus on the relative values of resources and ensure responsiveness to the conservation of greater sage-grouse and its habitats.
- The socioeconomic impacts of the alternatives will be addressed. Socio-economic analysis will use an accepted input-output quantitative model for renewable energy analysis.
- The BLM will use current scientific information, research, technologies, and results of inventory, monitoring, and coordination to determine appropriate local and regional management strategies that will enhance or restore sage-grouse habitats.

- Management of existing Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) will be guided by the Interim Management Policy (IMP) for Lands Under Wilderness Review. Land use allocations made for WSAs must be consistent with the IMP and with other laws, regulations, and policies related to WSA management.
- All activities and uses within greater sage-grouse habitats will follow existing land health standards. Standards and guidelines (S&Gs) for livestock grazing and other programs that have S&Gs developed will be applicable to all alternatives.
- The BLM will coordinate with Native American Tribes to identify sites, areas, and objects important to their cultural and religious heritage within greater sage-grouse habitats.
- BLM will ensure compliance with all applicable local, state, tribal, and federal air quality laws, statutes, regulations, standards, and implementation plans and include consideration of climate change research.
- Vegetation management, including management of noxious weeds and invasive species objectives (including identification of desired future condition for specific areas) will be developed within greater sage-grouse habitat.
- The LUP amendments will be based on the principles of Adaptive Management.
- Reasonable Foreseeable Development Scenarios and planning for Fluid Minerals will follow the BLM Handbook H-1624-I and current fluid minerals manual guidance for fluid mineral (oil and gas, coal-bed methane, oil shale) and geothermal resources.
- Greater sage-grouse habitat conservation measures will follow the Sage-grouse National Technical Team's A Report on National Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Measures (BLM 2011).
- The LUP amendments will be consistent with the BLM's National Sage-Grouse Conservation Strategy.
- The LUP amendments must comply with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Council on Environmental Quality regulations at 40 CFR 1500 - 1508 and Department of Interior regulations at 43 CFR 46, BLM H-1601-I Land Use Planning Handbook, "Appendix C: Program-Specific and Resource-Specific Decision Guidance Requirements" for affected resource programs, the 2008 National Environmental Policy Act Handbook (H-1790-I), and all other applicable BLM policies and guidance.
- The LUP amendments will be developed using an interdisciplinary approach to prepare reasonable foreseeable development scenarios, identify alternatives, analysis of resource impacts, including cumulative impacts to natural and cultural resources and the social and economic environment.
- The LUP amendments will contain decisions that are allocative and/or prescriptive to conserve sage-grouse habitat as well as objectives and management actions to restore, enhance, and improve greater sage-grouse habitat.
- The most current approved BLM corporate spatial data will be supported by current metadata and will be used to ascertain greater sage-grouse habitat extent and quality. Data will be consistent with the principles of the Information Quality Act of 2000.
- State Game and Fish agencies' greater sage-grouse data and expertise will be utilized to the fullest extent practicable in making management determinations on public lands.